

California's MUTCD Adoption Process – A Brief Summary

May 20, 2004

- In 1999, the CTCDC initiated the process for adoption of the MUTCD to replace the Caltrans Traffic Manual. This adoption would lead to greater uniformity of traffic control devices in California with nationwide practices.
- Since the MUTCD was undergoing a rewrite at that time, this effort was placed on hold until December 2000.
- Over the following two years, 2001 and 2002, a section by section comparison was made between the Caltrans Traffic Manual and the MUTCD. Included in this review were some other Caltrans publications such as Traffic Sign Specifications, new policies and internal memos, Highway Design Manual Chapter 1000 (Bicycles), portions of the Maintenance Manual, Ramp Meter Design Manual, HOV Guidelines and CTCDC's Light Rail Traffic Manual.
- Starting in early 2003, draft texts were prepared for each part of the California Supplement and submitted to the CTCDC and California Department of Transportation's internal advisory committee for review. To help the review process, additional discussions were held in two two-day workshops with CTCDC members in July and September, 2003.
- Based on these reviews, discussions and recommendations, the draft text was finalized and made available for public comment in November 2003 through the California Supplement web site. The draft text was further amended and finalized based on public input through the comment period, which ended on December 31, 2003.
- Although the draft text for the MUTCD 2000 California Supplement was completed in 2003, a decision was made (at the January 22, 2004 CTCDC meeting) to adopt the MUTCD 2003 Edition (which had recently been released by FHWA) rather than the 2000 Edition. This resulted in postponing the MUTCD adoption for California to May 2004.
- A CTCDC workshop was held in Sacramento March 25 and 26, 2004 to discuss the MUTCD 2003 Edition changes. Based on these workshop discussions, the draft text for the California Supplement was finalized and made available for public comment through the California Supplement web site. The final text was finalized based on public input through the comment period, which ended May 16, 2004.
- On May 20, 2004 pursuant to the provisions of the CVC Section 21400 and the recommendation of the CTCDC, Caltrans adopted FHWA's MUTCD 2003 Edition as amended by the MUTCD 2003 California Supplement, to prescribe uniform standards and specifications for all official traffic control devices in California.
- Beginning May 20, 2004, the MUTCD 2003 Edition and the MUTCD 2003 California Supplement supersedes and replaces the 1996 Caltrans Traffic Manual, as amended, and all previous editions thereof.